CAUTION:
DEEP WATER
Katherine L. Gordon

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Table of Contents:

Foreword / Acknowledgments	5
Walk Into Clouds	6
Re-Finding the Wild	7
Finding Life	8
Sister Moon	9
Nothing is Ever Lost	10
Knowing Leaves	11
Deep Water	12
Life Lines	13
Retirement Home	14
Observing the Water Denizens	15
Seas of Diversion	16
Disposables	17
Sunday Bells	18
Captain Leaves the Ship	19
Escape	20
Water-Play	21
Missing Connection	22
Meal-Plan	23
A Dangerous Communion	24
Moonless	25
Alien Rules	26
Philosophy Schools	27
Restless is the Heart of an Exile	28
Early Winter Rain	29
Marketing	30
Season of Lists	31
Still Written in Stone	32
Conjuring Connections	33
People Have Almost Met Here	34
Pragmaic Pet Rules	35
Find a River	36

Fate Thieves 37
Different Zone 38
Wisdom of Crows 39
Community 40
Summer Heat 41
Sweet Memory 42
Past Cameos 43
No Age in New Age 44
The Nova 45
A Residue of Ghosts 46
The Flowers of the Forest 47
A Comfort of Things 48
Dining Hall Vignette 49
Second Encounter 50
Meeting the Light 51
The Magic of Rain 52
Weather-Works 53
Spell to Cure Barrenness 54
Fables in Fabric 55
What the Valley Taught 56
What Removal to a City Taught 57
Asking The Wolf 58
Half Way House 59
Lighting Escape 60
Semaphore 61
Of Opiates 62
Philosophy Club 63
Living Art 64
What We Live By 65
Butterflies 66
Light Guide 67
Biography 68

Foreword:

This book was born of the shock of being transplanted. We lived for 50 years in a secluded river valley sanctuary where wild life abounded, native plants thrived, cliff and the Eramosa River bordered the land, fairies dwelt in secret meadowcircles, leaves made patterns on the many windows. Birds of woods and water gladdened the skies. Fate spreads tangled nets for humans to catch us without a plan. My partner was stricken with Parkinson's and dementia and unravelled. We chose a new retirement condo, not knowing that landscaping was not yet complete and the field beyond the patio was desolate. The change was drastic in life-style. It has been a deep water journey into an alien land.

– Katherine L. Gordon, summer 2018.

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Page 28, *Restless is the Heart of an Exile*,
previously published in Synaerisis 3, Harmonia Press.

Page 29, *Early Winter Rain*, previously published
in Landscapes, Cyclamens and Swords Press.

The support of my many friends in poetry.

Walk Into Clouds

Wind teases windows
while I am in the library,
quiet books silent walls
only thoughts a noise,
feet want to walk
into dark shifting clouds
that know where they are going
and entering so will I,
now caught in window-wait
direction lost.

Re-Finding the Wild

Amidst formality
a hidden path
birds welcome as they know my heart
I reply in a language learned
a conversation that restores me,
empty spaces eased
nourished with kindred blood and water
flights over a fountain.
Queen Anne's lace and lavender,
no leap into water today
just touch the living Earth.

Finding Life

Not so much the water
as the weeds
living strands willowing
that call to me
hiding the deep unknown
with searching filaments
hosting small life
wanting to creep ashore
burrow in earth
stretch beneath that sun-circle
grow, change and live.

Sister Moon July 28, 2018

Tonight a blood moon
tumult in heaven
I have tasted eclipse
too familiar now
remembering in fire-burst
that when the long darkness
slides away
light changes everything.

Nothing is Ever Lost

When home and mate fade
into flashed history
all the long familiar
an unbelieved dream -
I stand at the gate of creation
to re-find myself -
the boiling sea
waters I should know
that gave me being
indifferent but so wise,
I compel like a wizard
to re-create me
dream me a bridge
that I may cross carefully
back into life, away from the dark universe
of watery cauldron,
nothing really lost
but re-emerging as a new star.

Knowing Leaves

Leaves used to make patterns
on my valley windows
embrace exchanged
energy reciprocal,
trees nodded tresses to me
as I walked by
touching familiar branches.
Now leaving blinded windows
I wend through formal gardens
where bushes are bound in tight
controlled foliage,
shapes curtailed.
I slip a hand beneath their corsets
into softer struggling skin
and feel a wild heart
waiting for release
to stretch unfettered
into jubilant sun-coaxed excess.
I empathise.

Deep Water

Currents beneath the skin
surface when we are transported
away from all familiar land
and water marks that mapped our days.
Like exiles throughout time
who lost their way
yet lived to build again
some decorated semblance of thatch.
The verge is slippery
the water deep
the wish to submerge strong,
easier than the float away as clouds
to other unloved doors
where we can sing a hollow home,
re-make the heart
allow the grief to hide again
beneath the blood and water
of our life essence.

Life Lines

Food with friends
who gather in the new surround
where old connections hang on walls
comfort blankets protect former shared beds
rugs pretend aging of un-trod near-wood floors.
They cannot re-make the patina of long life
in the deep waters of institutional decor.
Venice sinks.

Retirement Home

Not the pine and maple
red oak of sturdy stone home
with stained glass and fireplaces
that echoed man's niche
in cliff-clad valley
No leaves, trees, bird, bush or river and forest dwellers,
not a fairy intervening Nature,
just the brick and chrome
of industrially-ordained structure.
A virtual November
for every month one survives
in long halls with fake plants
shut doors and green-deprived vistas.
All the body expects without visceral connection.
I will decorate it with hair and bone,
all that can be encased without wind or water.

Observing the Water Denizens

There are no young people here
laughter is raspy and scant
faces lift into smile-mode
retreat behind old grief lines
hooded eyes.
“How is your health?’ “How is your money?”
“Passing fair” “Bank held,” the answers.
Everyone lies.
One fellow says “I don’t socialize”
but I comment on his tool-box in the walker
and he fills with light.
Perhaps a social gathering planned
to learn the WHY of our surrenders.

Seas of Diversion

Set out puppies and kittens
leaping long halls
gargantuan pots of living plants
exuding earth scents, errant leaves, rampant flowers,
children to teach us to play
in salt water pools,
pretend Lost and Found until the doors vanish
and we are out beneath a moon
howling
tides restored.

Disposables

There is a dungeon
below the queenly apartments here,
we take the keys that mark our un-free state
wear them on anxious wrists
take the silent elevator alone
to Lower Level...LL on the button,
carrying our assorted throw-aways
to waiting metal buggies
big enough to hold bodies
in a dark concrete tomb of compost,
one concentrated heave is all it takes
then a retreat out heavy door we trust will open.
No discards whimper, not another soul appears,
even ghosts avoid this room.

Sunday Bells

On the sidewalk a block away
streets with pretty houses
families of the free
expecting to live forever
in their gardens of the moment.
From an unseen church there sounds
a Sunday bell sweet throughout the sacred hours
of a perceived holy morning.
Tears well as former Sundays are conjured:
hats and hankies, hands held,
pews of Saturday-bathed folks
awaiting priestly scolding,
greeting old friends in eternity promised embrace,
roof of the mouth wafer assuring absolution.
Now empty streets
intrusive mock European village of the old and alone
trying to recall the stream of life
with all its bells of beauty.

Captain Leaves the Ship

He wears a t-shirt saying “Captain”
without remembering
that he and his son once built a boat.
No sea legs now
but a shuffle to reach the walker.
He finds the bath an ordeal,
care-giver fussing, clothes inside-out
a test.
In this surface pretence of life
he dreams of deep water,
courage once to stay afloat,
now adrift precariously
from all he built and dreamt,
floating in temporary space
some dregs and ribbons
dragging him down.

Escape

I dream a wee house in the woods,
no ever-cheery staff checking
to see if in-mates still alive,
have they filled out menus
have they joined bus-tours
to places to see again…and again.
I curl up in familiar chair
brought from house where I really lived,
read books of escape
plots of solo adventure,
assure them all is well
while I secretly pack and plan:
emigration, vanishings to unmapped islands
where no one dies alone
because the ever-shifting sea
will lap them.

Water-Play

In the morning I remember
my pine kitchen of cupboards and counters
where I could feel the heart of living wood
through its varnished skin.
Now granite slabs entomb me
with stern modernity, light speckled brown
of unhatched bird's eggs, no inscription yet.
Brown cupboards of pressed perplexity-mix material,
no nonsense chrome pulls
I could squirt you with the one-faucet-does –all
that mocks my former brass taps over white
porcelain sink I loved to shine,
dull resonance here in stainless steel efficiency.
Convex steel refrigerator gleams its guard
against any notes of souvenir life...
I refrain from posting Star Trek heroes.

Missing Connection

I used to feel the affinity of work
in my windowed laundry room of home,
the measure of soap
reliable old machines awaiting my choices
the long oak counter-top for sort and fold,
here computerized washer and dryer
accept each offering on their own terms,
concrete walls and floor proclaim “utility”.
I dream the clothes-line or railing
of fragrant wood days,
think of bushes, sunlight on benches,
linen that drank the sun
scented moon nights.

Meal-Plan

Small salmon unlucky
to leave the waters of its cool bay -
find itself fillet thinly-cut
touted “catch of the day”
on a nouveau china plate
beside some briefly sun-kissed veggies,
scoop of slaw, probably bread,
all the food groups chef-decreed
while we dream
a tree-pungent pear
exotic cheese and wine.

A Dangerous Communion

Sneaking off the shuttle-bus
to find a licenced restaurant
order wine and cake
leave the pills of the day
on granite counters,
no need to count the day
no protein or veggie by decree
just a dangerous communion
of alone and briefly free
some person-hood restored
in rebel choice.

Moonless

The courtyard captures clouds
but surrounding buildings
have stolen the moon.
There is a sun-set over
the swimming-pool structure
that lights the glass tiers
bestowing sea dreams -
a beam for a boat to set sail
search for the moon
that informed with silver eternity
the birth and fade of nights.

Alien Rules

They have decided I must
explore the amenities
and activities that keep
the captured from thoughts
of end-of –days.
Chair exercises, plant pruning, old movies
concerts and tours -
all the things the living avoid.
I refuse, congratulate them
on their dedicated jobs,
I close the door to read and write
touch the minds that rebelled
against sequester, broke free
as Leonardo's flying machine,
see my visions in ageless sky-scapes,
deep waters of forgotten sunken cities
all the lights that took us through other portals
when this one is closed.

Philosophy Schools

As Rome imploded
schools of wise philosophy arose
heretical thoughts to the Christianity that followed.
Some wisdom continued through many erratic eras
into our own.
In our precarious times schools of shared ideas
that glare a light on modern fakery,
politics of greed and hate,
groups that could replace
these Earth-lethal forces,
should be nourished.
Each positive thought a skipping-stone
to ripple the seas, appear as new
in minds and hearts made cynical
with lies and despair.
Such a school is needed here,
villages of only the old
are not a kind phenomena.
Minds know no age, unique thoughts endure,
we will name it Gnosis in a New Age.

Restless is the Heart of an Exile

This little town holds
a contained and fragile charm
where my elsewhere-birthed spirit
learns to survive.
My sustaining friends candle it into home
though shadows shimmer in curtained corners.
The land of ancestors buried in hard-won sacred soil
calls out to my waiting bones...
I am forbidden to answer,
grieve for my moment to come
when alien soil covers restless remains
and spirit hovers between
the world that barely embraces me
and the pulsing claim of blood and ligament,
heart, spirit and tribal ties
that scream for my absorption
back into fiery particles that stoked my entity.
Wine cannot placate, bread of other fields seldom satisfies,
a communion I must re-learn.

Early Winter Rain

The rains have melted the sun
wrapped all the trees and grasses
in a mist of mystery,
land and waters no longer separated
as in ancient decree,
no rigid order present to affirm
that we are singular in creation.
A cedar-wind scents
the circle of stone and moss
hinting preservation.
The morning swallows me
and I am a rusk of leaf,
hungering winter bird,
knowing there is no certainty
even in the shift of season.

Marketing

Glossy brochures
pictured private haven,
amenities if needed.
Reality was an under-construction
retirement home, landscaping
a touch of Beirut.
a shock from country-quiet
embracing home with family life
reflected in patina and glow.
Too sheltered from marketing ploys, we trusted,
“Independent Living” just a catch-phrase
for supervision and intrusion.
Learn to navigate the system as in school days of old,
preserve your autonomy to grow strong.

Season of Lists

In your own garden
you have no age,
you season with the flowers,
hibernate with the frost,
return with the birds,
greet the awakening sleepers.
Here there is no re-cycling of the old:
you are on lists,
foot - eye - ear
parts all assessed.
One used to be whole
not separated as in some Egyptian weigh-scale,
pre-mummified
praying integration,
though you signed up for “independent Living.”
Rebel of course, deep but navigable waters.

Still Written in Stone

My patio fosters cheeky geraniums,
a rose-shaped impatiens brushes
the brick and stone pillar,
heart-hurting beauty that echoes
the wild roses of the cliff we shared back home,
fleeting loveliness decorating eternal rock,
the cliff part of the escarpment marching to Niagara,
gifted by retreating glacial rivers.
The stones still held the caught-in-mud fossils
of an ancient age.
Here the large square rocks that align
in landscaping perfection
are a darker limestone,
displaced like me from their long tenure
in the earth they helped nourish and secure.
Here they must learn to adapt,
find their place and purpose,
flank new shrubs and trees, possibly blossoms,
call to the birds “Come, here is shelter.”
I learn from them, as enduring, shifting stone
has often informed my spirit.
I await the birds
and vision green.

Conjuring Connections

A sadness creeps through me
in the grey sky-lid over earth barely morning,
salt tears of body and spirit.
I can never re-awaken in my old home
where cliff and woods sighed
with a faith in time's river of eternity,
ever a bush, ever a bird,
a coyote basking in the moon
as generations renewed but remained the same,
old and young a blend in every entity.
Here I cannot find the connection.
I feel in every fibre
that I am not made
of halls and elevators,
not the shadows of once-people
I rarely see.
It is the walks into wilderness that save me.
Each day I find a new path
for there are woods surrounding
this rude intrusion into former forest.
I need to melt again
into the living earth
where dwells my pure core of being.

People I Have Almost Met Here

Who are they really?
A very tall man holds the heavy
front doors for me,
we assess each other briefly
for I am small
beside his gaunt and stooped frame,
his eyes remember agility.
He says it is good to be some use
and carries one of my parcels.
Some joy sparks in the moment
for I have briefly endowed purpose
to his morning.
I retreat and do not offer my name.

Pragmatic Pet Rules

There are pet rules
in this retirement home:
no dog more than 30 pounds
and only by special permission.
Our beloved border collie was 65 pounds
of devotion and duty. Aging too.
The new owners kept her
for she knew every brier and tangle
of the 25 acres she guarded
She was lucky to stay in her home
to live out her days with purpose,
but the poignancy of parting
a never-ending grief,
we were not so lucky in the leaving.

Find A River

They cannot manicure the water
as they do the scant strips of green surround,
I head for the wilder untouched parts
that are decreed a haven from development,
old forest still surviving, fairies still abiding,
with river branches smugly sliding through,
I love their pride of being.
There are benches, splashed and blessedly solitary,
where I can re-join the living wild.
Will I ever think this place “home”
when I return?

Fate Thieves

If only my husband
had not had his mind stolen
by dementia,
we could have kept
our stone and wild-rose connections.
When he becomes absent
from his incarnation here
I may dissolve this
pressing duty of days,
find a cottage, large dog,
my place in the stream of life again
while heart and will still abide.

Different Zone

There is a zone of meditation
where a spirit re-connects,
perhaps the illusion of “here”
something I need to learn.
No faith I know can rescue
one lost in what the fates bestow,
but submerging all illusion
helps to centre
the sea-sick heart,
dream alternatives
and vision the place of “belonging”.

Wisdom of Crows

They arrive in pairs
to survey the roughly seeded field
before it transforms to bush or grass,
pick up many seeds and talk
of the landscape to be.
Perhaps in this lonely space
there is a place for crows,
they have followed battles before.
They sense and pontificate
upon the bounty to come.
In their black coats
and confident strut
I see flights of trans-substantiation
and rejoice.
Whatever happens, the crows will know.

Community

I suggest open-door day
with Newfoundland-gifted mummers
to go from suite to suite,
startle and revivify
the quiet inmates,
they could offer chair-dancing,
name the mime,
loud laughter,
Snake and Escape Ladders.
How do I send for them?
A work-order filtering
through Administration
classified “Caution”?
I know I will find another door
unlocked to portals—other lives.
It is coming because
like Einstein’s “particle waves of the future”
I can summon it.

Summer Heat

Shimmers on the water,
birds dive and play feather-quakes,
this oasis amidst the condos
is a spirit-boat to Sirius.
I think of the warming planet,
the heat of Portugal and Spain sparking fires
while politicians deal oil and coal,
allow emissions, pesticides to murder bees,
build condos like the one I must return to
while everyone longs for cool water,
cool air, kinder hearts.

Sweet Memory

Where is the ice-cream truck
in this strictured settlement?
I did not dream to banish dogs,
kids, parks and joyous noise.
Memories of snitching ice-chips
from the ice-truck with a benevolent
kid-compassionate driver,
best of all the bell-buzz of the ice-cream truck
that held us nickle-begging boys and girls
clustered round the mounds of vanilla and chocolate,
melting on the chin, exaggerating smiles
on all the happy faces.
Here it comes in a cup if you order it with dinner,
low-fat, low-sugar and solo.

Past Cameos

I once ran a foot-race on Cape Breton,
came first, a girl from-away,
because I was small and quick.
The reward was a home-made ice-cream
of real cream and strawberries,
also a pot-holder hand-crafted
not for use on our electric stoves.
It hung by the bake-table for years,
a trophy I enjoyed,
but that ice-cream has left a pain of longing,
like elusive music of the spheres,
I can never tangibly hold it to fill the senses again.

No Age in New Age

Old people need not play old
but use the faculties left to immerse
in the deep water of life -
moon will radiate, sun will blaze,
lights that ever illuminate earth,
our age is minute in comparison.
We are blessed to be part
of the whole precession of life,
a play where each player
is crucial to the scene.
We invent, create, make music and poetry
to catch the progression,
contributing to the whole of evolution,
though we stumble and fumble,
hold back the whole process for an era,
we are still fated to appear in a new star,
love and peace, radiant beauty,
knowledge and wisdom await.

The Nova

Learning to be alone has strangely freed me,
I can explore philosophies of old,
all the secrets of ages passed down
through solitary wizards.
I can conjure them, distil them,
vision solitary shaman connected to the wolf
on moonlight trek.
Duty only to myself in puzzling increments,
I feel less part of humanity, more of universal energy.
All the lights of stars and windows dazzle me.
No fear of entering or leaving as a quiet cloak hides me
while I find a spirit-boat to join my energy to the stars
that have always awaited me.

A Residue of Ghosts

Concentrating, I can see the ghosts
of this once-forest,
waiting to return:
the vanished birds, trees and fairies
in a misty circle,
the green returning.
This building rises on a hill,
the sky a lid, close and cloud-messaging
over new pillars.
The earth with mounds of rich top-soil
stretches for promised planting,
the shapes of all that was and needs to be
visible in an aura.
Landscape will soften, spread its bounty
to those who wait on eager concrete patios
for the embrace of life.
Rabbits have inspected, sea-gulls perused,
earth suspirates to replenish.
We breathe together, ghosts requited,
old scars heal.

The Flowers of the Forest

If my partner could still heft the bag-pipes
he would play The Flowers of the Forest
for his lost life, his home, his pride, his command
of all he once built.
Many an immigrant has suffered the same.
I tell him stories of his parents leaving their croft and history,
the bone, blood and heart of being, transplanted.
They raised a family, accomplished much,
joy in growing new kin.
How do I console a hero who laments,
like the Dying Gaul of Roman statuary,
sees no future in the no-use, no freedom
of his new care setting?
Sometimes our purpose becomes to exist
and remember, carry the old stories
that eulogized chieftains and bards,
confer a lineage on descendants
who still celebrate the long life of a good man.

A Comfort of Things

I begin to place the art and treasures,
brought from our real home,
into naked places of the condo,
trying to re-create a sense of comfort,
heart connections to souvenirs of years.
Will they bridge the gulf of grief?
Each one has a history, old family ties,
places we toured together held in matter.
Some so familiar they whisper “see, you are still
a keeper of memory and story.”
New covers on old tables, prim and safe.
Find me a tree, a singing bird,
re-hang my heart.

Dining Hall Vignette

I walked the partly finished, sidewalk and gravel path,
to Town Hall Dining ,
promised to bring a dinner home for partner,
in insulated bag.
“Sophie” she advised, as I sat down beside her.
Everyone has a story and I promised myself to write some down.
Sophie in her nineties is still back in Poland in a concentration camp.
She tells of her family taken by gun-point at midnight.
After the war Canada invited them to the Prairies.
Her former farmer father restored in hope.
Sophie thrived, married and retired, but says the food here
is something she would feed the pigs.
Sausage and dark soft bread her choice.
I surmised the chef here would not approve,
as I nibbled my fish and salad-
healthy, colourful, balanced according to today’s rules.
I contemplated the sausage Sophie describes
and know her yearning.
I hold her hand a moment
and trudge back to “home”
with the allotted entree.

Second Encounter

Another Dining Hall Encounter

Sometimes the joy of escape to dinner
is found in another human to observe,
lean into for conversation to an ear that hears,
my mate being profoundly deaf.
Janice has a son who writes , was excited
that I might read his book, not finished yet
but years in the puttering.
She talks of his many accomplishments,
doesn't realize her own.
I can see her making tea for everyone
in pots of perfection
while she tells them of her son.

Meeting The Light

The staff visit one-by-one
to see my Medieval-themed den,
they tell me their aspirations of careers,
if waitressing could be done.
I see such promise in their youth and hope
but fear the times are very hard for them.
They are filled with ideas and ideals,
they lend me energy and light.
I hope together they can shape a kinder world,
a peaceful planet,
not be wasted in the struggle.

The Magic of Rain

Rain fell on the mounded top-soil
awaiting planting outside the patio doors,
fragrance of wet and thirsty earth
wafting primordial knowledge
of the elements of life,
I could smell the not-there-yet flowers.
The afternoon sea-gull circled.
The primeval core of my spirit responded
with a rapture of gratitude.

Weather-Works

Stone columns, artful brick, glass and steel arches
need the embrace of weather
to erode the newness
into a soft old-world charm.
Today the long and welcome rare rain of this summer
washed the facades and patios,
softened the stone
glistened the glass
promised a gentle aging,
contours to communicate history,
endurance and security in an uncertain geography.
A feather-grey sky brushed roofs,
misted doorways, gentled all.

Spell to Cure Barrenness

Architecture needs people
to complete its purpose,
as in all the sacred sites since time began
humans endowed life, vibrant rays of fierce emotion
to seed the walls, essence of all the panoply of
our journey through time and places of the heart.
The electric interplay of people filters dream and yearning
into hungry halls, stores it, for all who pass, to absorb.
We live on in the aura of lived-in passage-ways, a sacred
experience to create “home” to those who enter.
I touch the wood and stone as I walk
exchanging the gift of dreams to fertilize
the virgin structures.

Fables in Fabric

I vision cloth merchants of old
traveling elegantly with fine horses
carrying magnificent cloths
to this isolated condo complex.
Each suite open to transformation,
unique to its occupants,
colours in hangings weave the charm of personality.
Rugs and cushions reflect what warms the heart,
breaks the tedium of bland look-alike rooms.
Pictures of exotic places where one dreams to be
flout their depth in walls and corners.
I picture Rembrandt and the Cloth Makers Guild,
talks transformed by a tablecloth so rich and deep
that nothing else can matter or disturb.
I am lost in the fabric of life, fringes and flocking
binding the spirit.

What the Valley Taught

Somewhere...
a rush of caribou
drumming the skin of Mother Earth
shaking the tundra with cave animation.
Here…
a cold catch-your –breath wind
dervishes into cliff caves
in this primeval valley gouged by glaciers,
imprints of the first connection:
skin of man on belly of mother,
encounter with the spiral code of beginnings.
We fill with rain
fall with flowers
grind with rock
wash hair in rivers to the sea,
become the molecules of earth
seeking fusion
to live or die in her embrace.

What Removal to a City Taught

Far from healing wildflowers,
thorn-teasing cliff roses,
these stones can seem forlorn,
no elf-song along levelled hills,
yet their presence dances
in dawn chimera, cloud-catchings,
castle fragments in stone-scattered field.
I belong to the primeval,
a living earth where wildlife cries,
wolves guide into vision
of other-dimension paths.
This new intrusion into an old landscape
can reflect origin,
it will blend in time,
a pre-ruins connection to the works of man
destined to merge, root with trees
grow ivied windows,
take evolving residents back
into Mother Nature's arms,
no decay, just buds.

Asking The Wolf

In the mystic hours
between midnight and dawn
I travel in the astral
sit beside a waiting Shaman
accompanied by a wolf
who allows one question,
only truth gets past
his intense gaze
as he weighs your spirit.
“Where is my home?”
I ask of both
“In the woods away from the material,
the political, the money-fixated,
a spirit path to raise consciousness,
slowly help the troubled planet
re-find its centre in peace and harmony,
heal the wounds of man-changed climate,
backs turned on brothers.
This work cannot be done
in a ghetto for the aged
where frivolous distraction
sucks out the mind.

Half Way House

I know that I cannot survive here
in this half-way hotel setting,
between the house I loved
and the home I am destined to find,
a small place with large woods,
birds I feed, animals I salute.,
an exchange of energy to nourish me and Earth.
The fairies will know me,
the wildflowers nod.
A group drawn from different dimensions
will accompany me.
One needs so little
when the universe floods in
to lift the spirit into embrace of sky.

Lighting Escape

I begin the search,
any senior should be free
to find place and purpose
amongst wisdom seekers
of all ages.
I must escape this spirit stricture,
look for independence to fulfill the days.
Other seekers who don't retire from life,
but direct all they are into the needs of others,
will find me.
Time will never follow me into the leafy nest
of small cottage, huge aura.
What do Retirement Homes know
of the stretching soul?
Are they the new "Reform Schools"
for this generation?
I cannot conform.

Semaphore

I send out mind messages
to kin and friends
agents who tune in to my quiet quest,
signals they pick up
through the wave-lengths that connect us,
no matter how far they have drifted
into their own dimensions.
Perhaps an angel is listening.
Somewhere a wee cottage on some continent
has my name above the door,
a leafy abode that birds call sanctuary,
a river rippling close by,
just the sky and I exchanging light.
Supplies and comforts carefully stocked,
star-frosted trees guarding the gate,
the fairies and I will shape a sacred site.
Hold a single vision, keep the picture under your
mugwort and lavender pillow,
it will be your reality.

Of Opiates

Do not be trapped
into the Opiate of “Retirement Home”,
one week of old movies, sing-alongs,
chair exercise, paper flowers,
will paralyze the mind.
Kindergarten games for the graduate of life,
in whom resides answers to old riddles,
observations to astound the young and heedless.
Write down their ancient cures for mind and body--
sweet grass of experience,
their value in the human cycle so under-rated,
lost in the confinement of retirement institutions.

Philosophy Club

They arrive with trepidation,
out of the schedule here,
do they dare say what they think,
hope to influence the future of Earth days?
We discuss trends of violence, racism,
guns and war threats, forest fires
on newly-tenanted lands where humans should not build,
the quiet death of waters
ocean creatures of millennia of habitation
struggling to survive.
So many displaced and hungry.
We resolve to send recipes to save the planet
to every nation.
Maybe a world-wide school of philosophy
detached from politics and nationalism
would become the new medium of action.
We are only eight,
but we can watch the message
ripple out from little streams of thought
to all the seas of evolution.

Living Art

Yesterday our little tree was planted.
Thin and thirsty, like a fledgeling,
spreading small shiny leaves,
making a miracle of art on the sun-scoured
parched brick of the building opposite.
I saw its shadow silhouetted in the morning,
transcending any painting or graffiti,
a now and forever shadow-shade
of waving life.
The wall was transformed with
mutable living fresco.

What We Live By

Some, restless and needy,
choose the overwhelm of busy.
I have found the calm of balm of green,
under a tree, on the grass, butterfly skimming,
waft of wildflowers, senses filled,
heart happy, raptured,
part of green nature that heals every wound
of Earth and soul.
Planting not digging, sowing not spraying,
the tangle of green that is me.

Butterflies

Around the new planting outside
formality of patio,
two little yellow butterflies have come
to lay their eggs,
where dew and sustenance will surely be.
They come into life knowing everything
a butterfly should know, while we
must search for all these slippery truths,
not born like birds and butterflies
who know the secrets of trees,
our connection to all life
created in every star.

Light Guide

In the deep waters of transplantation,
exiled from all I knew and loved,
a light of understanding has come
to guide me back to shore,
the banks of home.
I have seen the other side
found it alien to life-forces.
Now a bit of wild land, small abode,
awaits, where I am free, connected to what really matters:
part of the light, part of the vision of radiant harmony..
Ask the wolf, the primeval icon who travels between the worlds,
our path is to see more dimensions,
understand our birthright, the connection to every living thing,
peace and love will surely follow.

Katherine L. Gordon Biography

Katherine L. Gordon is a poet, publisher, editor, judge, reviewer and literary critic. She has authored many books, chapbooks, anthologies and collaborations with fine Canadian writers whose work inspires her. She is published internationally, some translated into other languages. She devotes time and energy to the promotion of Canadian writers whose work now powerfully influences world culture.